

**BOARD OF EDUCATION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
MAY 14, 2024**

A regular meeting of the Enfield Board of Education was held in Council Chambers on May 14, 2024.

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM by Chairwoman Riley.

2. **INVOCATION OR MOMENT OF SILENCE:** Scott Ryder

3. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** Scott Ryder

4. **FIRE EVACUATION ANNOUNCEMENT:**

5. **ROLL CALL:**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Jean Acree, Dr. Gerald Calnen, Janet Cushman, Peter Jonaitis, Philip Kober, Tina LeBlanc, Amanda Pickett, Scott Ryder and Charlotte Riley

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

ALSO PRESENT: Mr. Christopher J. Drezek, Superintendent; Mr. Andrew B. Longey Assistant Superintendent; Student Representatives Kayla Surprenant & Alicia Lizotte

6. **BOARD GUEST(S)**

a. Girls on the Run

Chairwoman Riley welcomed Crandall grade 4 teacher Jessica Soule, and Girls on the Run students. Mrs. Soule is the coach and she spoke about this program. She introduced her assistant coach and Crandall Social Worker Mrs. Tullock. Community volunteer Ms. Norris was unable to attend tonight. This program has been in some of our other elementary schools throughout the years. Students in grade 3-5 can participate. This program helps students to learn about their inner strength and gain confidence while doing something athletic. Students will also complete a community project. She has seen positive changes in each of the girls. This year 20 girls participated. We completed our 5K run on May 11th and each of the 20 girls crossed the finish line. We are extremely proud of their accomplishments. Mrs. Tullock also spoke about the benefits of this program.

Girls on the Run students Ceci Tuttle, Gr. 4, Arelle Moreau, Gr. 4, Harper Price, Gr. 4, Madilyn Hunt, Gr. 4 and Allison Twarog, grade 5 spoke about what the program has meant to them and what they have learned from being part of Girls on the Run.

Mrs. Pickett thanked them for coming tonight. You have learned many great skills from being part of this club including positivity and self-confidence. She thanked staff members for supporting this club and the students. She hopes you will continue and is extremely proud of you.

Mr. Ryder also thanked the students and staff for continuing with this program at Prudence Crandall. His wife started this program at Eli Whitney in 2017.

Mrs. LeBlanc asked them about activating your star power. She loves this saying, and it is time we activated our star power here on the Board. She thanked them all for coming tonight. You all spoke so eloquently. She thanked Mrs. Soule and Ms. Tullock. She would love to see this program continue to grow in Enfield.

Mrs. Acree also thanked both Mrs. Soule and Ms. Tullock for bringing this great program to the Crandall students. This program helps to build their physical abilities, creativity, confidence and star powers. She congratulated the students for crossing the finish line. She is extremely proud of all of you, and she is also part of the Crandall family. She also welcomed Mr. Duperre. Thank you.

Mrs. Cushman spoke about how each of the students gained confidence and we can see it. We appreciate you coming here and sharing your experiences with us. Thank you.

Chairwoman Riley asked when did this program start. Mrs. Soule stated we started training on February 27th and ended on May 11th with our 5K race. We met two times a week for 90 minutes.

Chairwoman Riley asked about the community project they did. The students spoke about the community project. We all came up with ideas on how we could make our community better. We made cards that encouraged each other. We called this the Heart and Soul program. For our second project we made posters for the SBAC testing.

Mr. Ryder asked the students if they want more SBAC tests or were the posters to encourage each other to do well. The students stated they were to encourage everyone. We made two posters for each grade level. The students enjoyed seeing the posters and receiving the positive cards. Doing this made them feel really good and they loved receiving complements.

Chairwoman Riley stated you definitely activated your star powers and you have inspired her to activate her start powers. If she has a problem she will come to you. She is extremely proud of you. Keep up the good work.

Mrs. LeBlanc thanked them for what they are doing and sharing your experiences. They mean more than you will ever know.

b. Buzz Robotics

Chairwoman Riley welcomed our Mrs. Marr and Mrs. Jefferson along with Buzz Robotics students. The students (Selma Fidjat Gr. 11, Ian Cargile, Gr. 12; Sophia Carrier, Gr. 11; Rym Fidjat, Gr. 11 and Katia Diaz, Gr. 12) spoke about this year's program and their build season. The first event was held in Hartford at the Hartford District event, the University of Rhode Island event, the New England District Championship event and qualified for Worlds for the Houston First Championship in Texas. We are also very proud to recognize Sophia Carrier for making the Deans list. They also spoke about how they volunteer, their outreach programs and how they fundraised to get to world competition.

Mr. Jonaitis arrived at 7:22 PM.

The students thanked the Board and administration for supporting Buzz Robotics for the past 30 years. We will hold an open house at the Annex on May 22nd from 6:30 - 8:30 PM.

Dr. Calnan recognized Buzz students being predominantly women this year. When this program first started it was mostly comprised of men. Congratulations on your accomplishments. You have broken another glass ceiling.

The Buzz Robot provided a demonstration of tossing rings.

Mrs. Cushman congratulated Ms. Carrier for making the Dean's list. Ms. Carrier stated that both she and Ms. Fidjat competed at the Hartford District event where we were interviewed by two judges for around 10 minutes and then another interview with another judge at the next competition. There were no interviews at the World event, but they looked at our essays and all of the judges notes from previous competitions.

Mrs. Cushman added they were looking at your character, goals and things you have accomplished. You spoke about mentoring opportunities with Lego First League. Can you elaborate on what you do with mentoring? Ms. Fidjat spoke about the mock trial that was being held for Lego First competition. We would meet with Eli Whitney students and helped them. This was very rewarding being a mentor instead of being the mentee. We also helped the students at JFK in the same way for their official Lego First League program.

Chairwoman Riley added when you attend a competition it is a whole different show. You are such a great team. Congratulation and thank you.

Mr. Ryder stated at the open house you can see the robot give a full demonstration. This is such a great group of students. Each of you have been a NCCC winner for acts of kindness. Thank you.

Chairwoman Riley thanked them from coming and for bringing Buzz. She encouraged everyone to see Buzz in action on May 11th.

c. JFK Building Project

Chairwoman Riley welcomed Randy Daigle. Mr. Daigle thanked the Board for the invitation to tonight's meeting. He provided each Board member with a handout about the JFK project history. He reviewed the project's building information, education specifications, original project cost and final cost, the bidding process and funds expended, state reimbursement, and additional items that were not included in the original scope of the project. We have closed out the project \$4.2 million under budget and this project was done on time. This truly was a team effort.

Mr. Jonaitis asked about concession storage use. Mr. Daigle stated the concession has storage for food usage that will be used for current events. You cannot cook food there, but you can serve warm food for events. There are also handicap accessible bathrooms for spectators to use at events. We have pods available for additional storage items.

Mr. Jonaitis asked what the cost was for this. Mr. Daigle stated the cost was around \$900K. The biggest expense was for pumping waste up the hill. This was required by the State. The drainage, power and equipment cost us the most for this project. This was done at 71% reimbursement.

Mr. Jonaitis asked about the size of the gym being smaller. Mr. Daigle stated the gym was designed for a junior high school. It originally was not designed for public use. Mr. Jonaitis asked when basketball games are held is there enough space for sitting. Mr. Daigle stated you can seat 58-60 people.

Mr. Jonaitis added when he taught at JFK, we held many school-wide events in the gym. Mr. Daigle added the high school gym was designed to accommodate championship games and large events.

Mr. Jonaitis asked about the locker rooms and drains issues. Mr. Daigle stated they have been vandalized by the students. Repairs have been made and cost around \$18K to replace sinks and stalls. The drains are working properly.

Mr. Jonaitis asked about doors not properly closing. Mr. Daigle stated they have been readjusted. But it doesn't help when the doors are propped open by a wedge of wood underneath them. Mr. Jonaitis stated that is an after construction problem.

Mrs. Pickett asked about safety, security, camera's and locking doors. Mr. Daigle stated we spoke with a safety consultant when we were designing JFK and we tried to address every black spot. We have since added 32 extra cameras throughout the building along with

additional monitors in the security room. When you enter the main entrance, you need to be let in to get into the next part of the building. Fire doors will automatically close when needed. We designed the building so you are limited to what you can see when there is a lockdown. Teachers have received training about using blackout areas for safety concerns.

Mrs. Pickett asked if the doors can be locked from the inside. Mr. Daigle is not sure but believes they have a key entry.

Mr. Ryder stated during our school modernization tour last year, the teachers two favorite items were the audio enhancements in the ceilings and being able to dim the lights in the rooms. Mr. Daigle added during Covid, everyone was wearing masks and students couldn't hear the teachers. We were able to enhance the audio systems in the classrooms.

Mr. Jonaitis asked about the funds put aside for audio equipment for the auditorium. Mr. Daigle stated the funds have been appropriated and have been put aside. Once a PO is issued, the money can be expended for the purchase of this equipment. This item has been sitting for 17 months. We have had several meetings about this. Mr. Jonaitis asked who is holding the money for this. Mr. Daigle stated the previous town manager and whoever processes PO's in the town.

Mrs. LeBlanc added the audio can also be enhanced for students with hearing aids. Teacher are very excited about this feature. There have been a few bumps along the way. She enjoyed working with you. She was really hoping the school modernization plan would come to fruition. Thank you for all your hard work. Mr. Daigle stated students can connect via Bluetooth for their hearing aids.

Chairwoman Riley thanked Mr. Daigle for everything he has done. Thank you for your dedication to Enfield.

Mr. Drezek also thanked Mr. Daigle for everything he has done for the Enfield High and John F. Kennedy building projects. His hand has been involved in everything.

Mr. Daigle thanked Mr. Drezek and Mr. Longey for their support.

Chairwoman Riley thanked Mr. Drezek for his years of dedication to the students, staff, community and Board. You will be missed and thank you for sticking it out until the end.

7. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

a. Student Representative Update

EHS Student Representative Kayla Surprenant reported EHS AP exams are happening, the EHS Awards & Scholarship night will be held on May 21st, NGS testing will happen next week, we will have a half day on May 21st, the community action learning class will hold Fun Zones and wellness fair will be held on May 31st, and a psychology fair will be held on May 30th.

EHS Student Representative Alicia Lizotte reported the Choir & Orchestra will hold a concert on May 16th, Lacrosse will hold their senior night on May 21st, the Senior Prom will be held on May 24th, the Cultural Fair will be held on May 22nd, the Memorial Day Parade will be held on May 26th, Youth Vote will help with voter registration on May 29th, JFK and EHS Choir students will go to New York Broadway tomorrow to see Michael Jackson, Senior Class Picnick and banquet will be held on May 31st and the next level athlete will be held on June 3rd, Mr. Murray will hold a civil discourse on May 29 & 30th. She is the new co-president for the Black and Brown Student Union.

b. Early Release Day – as presented

c. EHS Awards & Scholarship Night – as presented

d. Memorial Day – as presented

e. EPS Update – as presented

8. AUDIENCES

Chairwoman Riley read a prepared statement regarding audience participation. We will allow 4 minutes for each audience member to speak.

Maureen Griffin, Abbe Road – Mrs. Griffin discussed the Town Council budget presentation disparities and special education students. Our Sped numbers can change year to year. We need more accurate number about ECS funding and Alliance funding. Our Alliance funding has not been fully funded. We have wonderful programs in our schools. The Town Council does not know what they are doing. She urged Board members to keep fighting the programs we need. She also asked Board member to understand your roles as Board members.

9. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Dr. Calnen stated we all have a teacher that has helped to shape our lives. His was Mr. Campbell at EHS. He made him a better student and taught him a lot. He also taught him to think creatively. How can you quantify the true value of a teacher? Our teachers do a lot for our children. The Town Council does not value our teachers. The voters will remember this.

Mrs. Pickett stated last week was teacher appreciation week. She thanked our staff, students and families for supporting education. The mayor does not understand our needs. Misinformation is being spread. The town has ECS funding that should have come to us. We have not received any Alliance funding. Bonding and rainy day funding needs to be used to support education. Full transparency is needed for all town departments and not just for the school system.

Mrs. Pickett would like an update on the school armed guards and the plan. Are we hiring full time or part time guards? Budget cuts will continue to increase. Will they receive any training so they can address student concerns? We have heard about vandalism concerns and student behavior concerns. Without proper training, this is a huge concerns for her.

Mrs. Pickett stated the Mayor asked for suggestions. They made cuts to CIP items last night. They are still not addressing the needs of our students. They have made a commitment to the security program but not the students. Nothing was said about our school modernization plan, or the needed updates and improvements needed to our schools. Their actions do not support us from getting out from being an Alliance district. Next year, we will roll out our new reading system. Cutting staff will be detrimental.

Mrs. Pickett addressed Mrs. Griffins concerns about numbers. You can go to Edsight for accurate information that comes from each district. It is very hard to predict how many sped students will move in or out of a district each year.

Mr. Jonaitis stated some people are in favor of the 8.68% school budget for next year. At the end of June this year, we will be \$3.9 million short. Federal monies have been spent. He was told that miscalculations were made. The last Board hired staff using ARPA funds. He is not sure how many people were hired but it is around 70. We are paying for these staff now. The Board and Town Council did several projects. He was told the parking lots, and the tennis courts were paid for fully by the Town Council and this all equates to \$1.7 million. There has been a lot of talk about the State not giving us our Alliance District monies. We were told we would receive \$1.4 million, and it was withheld from the Board of Education. This happened two times for the amount of \$2.8 million the Board of Education did not receive. The State uses all kinds of different formulas to determine how much money they will give Enfield. The Town Council has fully funded the Board for the last two years. According to the State formula, the Board of Education was not entitled to receive these funds. Central Office has made plans and spent money that would be reimbursed by the State, and they also thought they would receive money via grants. The question is where is the money going and who

received it. The State did not give the Board the Alliance money (\$2.8 Million). The checks may have gone directly to the Board of Education. The previous Town Manager instructed someone to transfer some of that money back to the Town Council. The Town Council was not under any obligation to give that money (\$2.8 Million) back to the Board of Education because they had fully funded the Board for the past 2 years. Where did the \$2.8 million end up? Was it spent on projects by the Town Council or is it sitting in an account somewhere? It appears that the Town Council will pay the \$3.9 million since the Board of Education is short. This is almost 4% of last year's budget that is being paid for by this year's Town Council. By doing this, next year's budget request of 8.68% and adding the \$3.9 million the Town Council will cover this year's budget shortage, we are looking at 12.5% the town will be paying for education if this budget request is fully supported.

Mr. Jonaitis added the people on the Board of Education and Town Council all ran and were elected as volunteers. Enfield has always provided a decent and good education to our kids. We have needed to lay off teachers before and have gotten them back. It is a cycle that repeats. We can only do what we can afford. Our taxes have increased. Our town government changed from Democrat to Republican majority. We need to learn how to work together and do what is best for our kids. The Town has other departments that need items also. Many things have been put off for years. Cuts have been made from many town departments.

Mr. Jonaitis stated he knows Mayor Nelson and he is a good man, and he is doing what is best for Enfield as well as the rest of the Town Council members. He stands behind Mayor Nelson. He is amazed by what people complain about. He used to be one of those people. He urged community members to run for the Board of Education and Town Council and see the tough decisions that we need to make. We will never please everyone. Teaching is a passion and a calling. Our teachers change the lives of our kids. Teaching is one of the most rewarding professions. He added that if he has helped anyone to understand this, that is good.

Mr. Kober stated he will focus on transparency, responsiveness and responsibilities. We should consider these priorities when making decisions. It is important to understand that we cannot make payments on credit. We make payments with funds we actually have. For those people that have reached out to him over the past couple of weeks, he appreciates your involvement in engagement and urge you to keep it up. Having a represented democracy is important. We represent the community, public, students and staff. He recently read an article that concerned him. It was about challenges and special education. It is stated in the article that someone from Enfield Public Schools did not respond to a request for a comment. He has heard from staff members that administrators from Central Office have not been showing up in the schools recently. They know the Superintendent is leaving and the Assistant Superintendent is not taking this position. This all ties into responsiveness. Transparency is a big thing. This is something that will involve the entire Board. These are simple ideas that will address oversight, situational awareness, reporting and disseminating information and understanding and giving a clear picture of the Board's decision making process and the administration. We need to reduce poor communications. Seeing misinformation is a spinoff of this that can be addressed with clear factual information. Feedback is also equally important. He agrees this should be a joint effort with the Town Council and has reached out to TC leadership about this. He looks forward to continuing this effort with the Town Council and Board moving the transparency initiative forward.

Mr. Kober stated he received a partial response to some of his earlier requests for information. We learned the Board employs 846 employees. This is important when you look at the budget information when you look at staffing numbers. There are 76% of salary staff and 24% are hourly staff.

Based on base salaries, we are obligated to \$50 million dollars. Approximately 42% of employees are Enfield town residents. This information can be useful for the Board when implementing policies, and resident incentives. We are talking about increasing our education and educator diversity plan, we want our staff to represent our community.

Mr. Kober asked via the Chair to the Superintendent about the payroll impact for the 121 non-renewals. He estimates that to be around \$6 million. Do you have that number? Mr. Drezek does not have that number.

Mr. Kober requests via leadership to receive that information. We have heard from staff and students about the devastating effects of this budget cut and the likely potential the Town Council may not be able to appropriate the requested amount. If we don't have the data and numbers, it is hard for us to make decisions.

Mrs. LeBlanc spoke about the \$3.9 million budget shortfall. We had 78 special education students enroll. ETLA has extended the program from age 21 to age 22. This also includes any student that is outplaced. The average outplacement cost per student is \$100-150K. Our Excess Cost grant came in at 67% instead of the 91%. All of this has added to our budget shortfall. This shortfall is not about misspending. This budget process is backwards. She does not want any special education families to feel they are a burden to us. We were not the only district that hired staff with ARPA funds. Alliance districts were told to hire more support staff and that is what we did. We have students that speak 16 different languages in our schools. Diversity should be celebrated and should not have a price tag on it.

Mrs. LeBlanc added that both she and Chairwoman Riley will attend the Monday Town Council meeting to discuss how we got to this point. The additional 78 special education students needed to be included in our budget for next year. Please keep in mind, the additional cost for SPED for next year is approximately \$3.7 million. Chairwoman Riley gave a presentation that included that increase in special education costs in our 8.68% budget request. This also includes contractual obligations. She also feels if she has helped anyone to understand just like Mr. Jonaitis did, that is good. We all have differences of opinions and different viewpoints.

Mrs. LeBlanc thanked the students and teachers that came out to the rally. Our students are amazing, and they spoke so passionately about our teachers. What they said shows the impact of what attending school is about. She also thanked them for sending e-mails.

Mrs. LeBlanc addressed Mr. Kober by saying you can't just take the 121 non-renewals salaries to figure out budgetary impacts. Based on what the Town Council will give us, we will not see the impact until we make deep cuts. There are many different moving parts that need to be considered.

Mrs. LeBlanc thanked Representative Carol Hall because she understands about our increase with special education students and made us aware of a waiver for when town's receive an increase of sped students.

Mrs. LeBlanc stated this is Mental Health Awareness month. She urged everyone to check on their family and friends and don't forget to check on yourself and be kind to yourself.

Mrs. LeBlanc stated when she was the Board of Education Chair, she wrote a recommendation letter for Mr. Drezek. We have had many great accomplishments with him at our helm. He is leaving us with a positive legacy. She read the letter she wrote. She has worked with Mr. Drezek for 13 years. He will leave Enfield with a legacy. You are always welcome back here in Enfield. She wished him good luck in Old Saybrook with your new appointment. She knows this was a difficult decision to make but sometimes we need to put ourselves first. Good luck to you and your family, you will be missed.

Mr. Ryder also wished all our teachers a Happy Teacher Appreciation week. Mrs. LeBlanc says ditto. He just wanted to thank all our amazing teachers for everything they do for our students and our children.

Mr. Ryder added on Friday, May 17th all grade 5 students can attend a spring dance at the

Alcorn Youth Center. This event is being sponsored by Enfield Youth Services.

Mr. Ryder also reminded everyone about the PLA Townwide Tag Sale that will be held on Saturday, May 18th. The funds raised from this event will go to the Enfield Food Shelf. This year they raised over \$3,100 which is the equivalent to 4,000 meals. Thank you to everyone that will participate in this event.

Mr. Ryder is hopeful that the Town Council will appropriate our budget request. He thanked the Town Council members that are working hard for us.

Mr. Ryder stated he moved to Enfield and started wearing Jordan's first. He joined the Board the first year Mr. Drezek was the Superintendent. He appreciates everything you have done for his children and all the students of Enfield over the past 20 years. Thank you for everything and good luck with your family.

Mrs. Acree stated it has been great working with Mr. Drezek. She wished him good luck and best wishes in Old Saybrook. Thank you.

Chairwoman Riley stated she received a lot of budget e-mails. She did not respond to form letter or copied budget emails. She tried to respond to all other emails. She apologized for the ones she missed. This is a difficult budget season. No one wants to lose their jobs. Our parents do not want to see their children impacted negatively. We cannot predict what every scenario will look like. We do not know what our final number will be yet. We have our non-renewals and are not filling open positions. We do not know how many of the non-renewals will come to fruition. We are legally obligated to send them out. Once we receive our final number, our interim superintendent and administration will meet over the next several weeks. The Board will need to approve the final budget.

Chairwoman Riley added nothing good comes easy. We have some creative and smart administrators. She is trying to make a positive from a potential negative. We will reset everything with a new superintendent, and we can build something that looks different and works better. She will do what she can to help and offer suggestions and possible solutions, so Enfield Public Schools can get through these changes with the challenges we are facing. She has hope that we can make something work. She will continue to work on the State to get our Excess Costs fully funded. She will do everything she can to get the correct information out and support our school system.

Chairwoman Riley commented on why half of the budget is for Education. Other towns like East Hartford, Manchester, and Glastonbury are spending just as much on their education. Education is not cheap.

Chairwoman Riley responded to Mrs. Pickett's concern about the Joint Security conversation. This is something we probably should have in executive session. She addressed Mr. Kober's comments about transparency and she supports this initiative. When people are saying they have not seen the administrators in the schools is something she has not heard. Mr. Drezek did say when he spoke about not being able hand deliver each non-renewal letter to staff. There was no way he could hand them out because there were too many of them.

Chairwoman Riley added this is not going to be easy, but she will stay positive and hopeful. Maybe the stars will align, and we can activate our star power and we can all meet in the middle.

Mr. Jonaitis addressed Mrs. LeBlanc about \$3.9 million, that amount could be less. He does not know how all the grants are calculated. Regarding the increase in the number of special education students, the only way we will get this money back is by another State formula.

Mrs. LeBlanc stated Representative Hall is helping us with that. Nothing at the State level will

happen quickly. Mr. Jonaitis added when we cash the check into the Board account, we will be happy.

10. UNFINISHED BUSINESS: - None

11. NEW BUSINESS:

a. APPROVE EHS SAFE GRAD DONATION FOR THE GRADUATING CLASS OF 2024

Mrs. LeBlanc moved, seconded by Mr. Ryder that the Enfield Board of Education approves the EHS Safe Grad Donation for the Graduating Class of 2024 as presented.

Discussion

Mr. Kober asked if this item is included in our budget as a line item and what department it will fall under. Chairwoman Riley stated there is a line item in the current budget for this and is included in the graduation line item.

Mr. Kober asked about the turnout for this event. Mrs. LeBlanc stated approximately 75% of the students attend. This event is well attended, and this is not a school function. The funds are a donation to support the Safe Grad event.

Mr. Jonaitis stated when this first was proposed many years ago, he wasn't in favor of it then either. Some students will not attend because they feel uncomfortable if they went, or they didn't have friends. There are a lot of reasons he is not in favor of this. If 75% are attending, 25% are not attending. He would rather see something else done like a field day where everyone is included

Mrs. LeBlanc added they hold a class picnic and other events that are school sponsored. She understands your point.

Mrs. Pickett asked what the amount is that we will donate? Mr. Ryder stated \$1,000.

A vote by **roll-call – 7-2-0** passed with Mr. Jonaitis and Mr. Kober voting in dissent.

b. APPROVE LESTER J. BODLEY SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

Mr. Ryder moved, seconded by Mrs. LeBlanc that the Enfield Board of Education approves awarding the 2024 Lester J. Bodley Memorial Scholarship for Student A and Student B as presented.

Discussion

Mr. Ryder stated this award will be presented at the Awards Ceremony that will be held on Monday, May 20th at EHS.

A vote by **roll-call – 9-0-0** passed unanimously.

c. APPROVE 2024-25 HEALTHY FOOD CERTIFICATION

Dr. Calnen moved, seconded by Mr. Ryder the Enfield Board of Education approves not to certify the 2024-25 Healthy Food Certification Statement pursuant to CGS. Section 10-215f, certifies that all food items offered for sale to students in the schools under its jurisdiction, and not exempted from the Connecticut Nutrition Standards published by the Connecticut State Department of Education, will comply with the Connecticut Nutrition Standards during the period of July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2025. This certification shall include all food offered for sale to students separately from reimbursable meals at all times and from all sources,

including but not limited to school stores, vending machines, school cafeterias, culinary programs, and any fundraising activities on school premises sponsored by the school or non-school organizations and groups.

Discussion

Mr. Kober asked for clarification for the vote. Chairwoman Riley stated you are voting to not certify.

Mr. Kober added he agrees with what our Nutrition Services Director is recommending to not certify.

A vote by **roll-call – 9-0-0** passed unanimously.

d. POLICY REVISIONS – FIRST READING

Policy #4115 Educator and Leader Evaluation and Support Program

Mrs. Cushman moved, seconded by Mr. Ryder that the Enfield Board of Education approves the first reading of Policy #4115 Educator and Leader Evaluation and Support Program with the additional changes as presented.

Discussion

Mr. Kober stated this policy has basically been rewritten. Included in the policy is goal setting, and educator growth. He asked about the PDEC and does this committee exist and who will it be comprised of.

Mr. Longey explained the committee has started to form and it will start next year. The membership will consist of curriculum, teachers, building administration and we have not assigned specific individuals yet.

A vote by **roll-call – 9-0-0** passed unanimously.

Mr. Longey added that next month we will bring 2 members from PDEC to explain the process. The Board will need to vote on this new plan. First the policy needed to be approved, then the plan would be approved and then sent to the State.

Policy #9322 Public and Executive Sessions

Mrs. Cushman moved, seconded by Mr. Ryder that the Enfield Board of Education approves the first reading of Policy #9322 Public and Executive Sessions as presented.

Discussion

Mr. Jonaitis is not in favor for allowing remote participation for executive session. He can see confidentiality concerns with this.

Mr. Kober stated Board members will need to certify that they are alone, and no one can see or hear what is going on during the executive session.

A vote by **roll-call – 8-0-1** passed with Mr. Jonaitis abstaining.

Policy #9326.1 Taping/Recording Board Meetings

Mr. Ryder moved, seconded by Mr. Kober that the Enfield Board of Education approves the first reading of Policy #9326.1 Taping/Recording Board Meetings as presented.

Discussion

Mrs. Pickett stated there are no legal references for this policy for video recordings of our meetings. Mr. Longey will look into this.

Mrs. Pickett added her concern is for personal intimidating recordings that have been made for clickbait purposes. Our meetings are live broadcasted and are also posted on YouTube.

Mr. Kober stated he would reference the State of Connecticut Freedom of Information Act. This is probably written in case law.

Chairwoman Riley added we need to have this policy because of ETV.

Mrs. Pickett is just wondering why we need this policy in place. Her concern is more about personal recordings.

Mr. Kober stated one of the reason for this policy is the chair is required to notify people that meetings are being recorded. This policy acknowledges that this is what we are doing.

A vote by **roll-call – 8-0-1** passed with Mrs. Pickett abstaining.

Policy #9350 Hearings

Mr. Kober moved, seconded by Mrs. Acree that the Enfield Board of Education approves the first reading of Policy #9350 Hearings with the additional changes as presented.

Discussion

Mr. Ryder asked for clarifications regarding the additional changes. Mrs. Cushman stated #1 Majority Vote will be changed to **Board Vote** and the first line will read – By two-thirds (2/3) vote of the **full** Board. Full will be added in.

Mr. Jonaitis added it will be 2/3 of the Board that is present that will vote on this. Mr. Kober stated that is correct.

Mrs. Pickett stated this is a nice addition and she supports this change.

Mr. Kober reviewed the policy for Mr. Jonaitis about public hearings.

A vote by **roll-call – 8-1-0** passed with Mr. Jonaitis in dissent.

e. DISCUSSION & POSSIBLE ACTION IF ANY REGARDING THE FY23/24 SCHOOL BUDGET

Chairwoman Riley provided an overview of the budget and anticipated budget shortfall. Multiple discussions were held with both Town and Board Leadership, Finance Departments and the Town Manager. This was also included in the budget presentation for the town hearing. Multiple factors play into this shortfall like Alliance funding (\$2.8 million), reduction with our State Excess Cost Grant from 91% to 67%, and the additional 78 special needs students. The Town Charter has reviewed this by the Town Attorney and the Town can assist with this shortfall. The Town of Enfield has agreed to provide the Town of Enfield with sufficient funds to cover needed expenses due to the shortfall of funds anticipated to receive from the State of Connecticut for the 2022-23, 2023-24 school years. The town has asked for the Board to vote to request a supplemental appropriation of \$3.9 million which the Town will grant. In addition, if the Board does not require the entire \$3.9 million shortfall, the remaining funds will be placed into the Board's contingency fund for use during the 2024-25 school year.

Mr. Kober moved, seconded by Mr. Ryder that the Enfield Board of Education approves the Board Chair to request from the Town a supplemental appropriation.

Discussion:

Mr. Kober stated there are 2 separate budget discussion that are happening. There is the FY24/25 budget that will start on July 1, 2024 and the current budget for FY23/24 and this fiscal year ends on June 30, 2024. We are currently projecting to go over the approved budget for this current year as explained by Chairwoman Riley. It is our duty to request additional funds. We still have 60 days left to process expenditures and encumbered funds. This is where the \$3.9 million number is coming from.

Mr. Kober added you cannot spend money we do not have. We need to control where we are and cannot run the risk of carrying debt into the next fiscal year. He has previously mentioned fiscal responsibility and the duties of Board members. The budget is one of our biggest duties. He will support this motion.

A vote by **roll-call – 9-0-0** passed unanimously.

12. BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Curriculum Committee: Mrs. Acree reported the Curriculum Committee will meet on May 16th.

Finance Committee: Mr. Kober reported the Finance Committee met on May 6th. We will review financial reports later on tonight's agenda. Our next meeting will be held on June 3rd. The budget summary that was discussed under item #11e was shared with both BOE and TC Leadership. The FY2023/24 budget was originally approved for \$75,929,555. million and the end of year projection is \$79,913,884 which creates a negative balance of \$3,984,329. We have a place holder for reimbursement projections of \$3,843,426 which has a confirmed negative balance of \$140,903.

Policy Committee: Mrs. Cushman reported the Policy Committee will meet on May 21st.

Leadership – Chairwoman Riley reported Board Leadership met on May 2nd and will meet again on May 16th. We discussed our next meeting and the Superintendent Search Committee. The survey went out and we will next look at the results and crafting interview questions at our next meeting. Board members can send interview questions to Board Leadership for potential Superintendent candidates.

13. LIAISON REPORTS

Joint Facility – Chairwoman Riley reported the last two Joint Facilities Committee meetings were cancelled.

JFK Building Committee – Mr. Ryder reported Mr. Daigle provided us with an update tonight.

Joint Security Committee – Mr. Ryder reported the Joint Security Committee met on May 10th and meets every other week.

Chairwoman Riley will ask about signage at the next meeting. That item is currently with the DOT and that will take some time.

Enfield Mental Health Committee – Mrs. Acree reported that Dr. Calnen, Mr. Longey and herself have been invited to participate in the Community Action Learning Project at EHS. Their project is about student mental and emotional health. EHS students will hold a mini wellness fair on May 31st in the cafeteria from 10:30 AM - 12:30 PM. Other community

organizations will also attend this event.

Enfield Cultural Arts Commission – Mrs. LeBlanc was unable to attend ECAC committee meeting.

School Reports/Updates:

Mr. Ryder provided an update about happenings/events at Eli Whitney - grade 5 students will tour JFK on May 15th, grade 4 students will go to the Connecticut Science Center on May 17th, the scholastic bookfair will be held next week, and they will hold an in-school Chorus Band concert on May 21st and at EHS on May 23rd.

Dr. Calnen provided an update about happenings/events at Head Start – will be conducting self-assessments and are reviewing goals and objectives, Kite recently presented at a conference about the power of play. He thanked Hazardville Memorial Kindergarten teacher Christina Nuzzolo for her partnership with the presentation. Kite also is grateful for their partnership with Enfield Public Schools for the Enfield Gets Ready for Kindergarten Night that was held in April. Kite will schedule another pediatrician dinner to be held this summer.

Mrs. Pickett encouraged families to look at your child's school newsletters. They can also be found on enfieldpto.com. Enfield Street/Parkman parents are encouraged to complete a family survey.

Mrs. Acree provided an update about happenings/events at Prudence Crandall – they wished a happy Mother's Day to all the Crandall mom's, SBAC testing is occurring, the Chorus/Band & Orchestra concerts will be held on May 15th, Field day will be held on May 31st, the PTO meeting will be held on May 21st, the May Pride Assembly will be held on May 28th and the one book three schools author visit will be held on May 30th.

Mrs. Cushman provided an update about happenings/events at Edgar H. Parkman – the survey questions will address topics about the school environment, community, and opportunities for family involvement. She also encouraged Parkman/Enfield Street families to complete the survey. The Parkman Chorus and Instrumental concert will be held on May 22nd at EHS in the Auditorium.

Mr. Kober provided an update about happenings/events at Henry Barnard – they will hold their field day on May 30th, the grade 1 field trip is on May 31st, grade 2 students will visit Prudence Crandall on June 4th and grade 2 will have their field trip on June 5th. He also encourage parents to look for the school newsletter for information.

Chairwoman Riley provided an update about happenings/events at Hazardville Memorial – their math night/book fair will be held on May 22nd, and the PTO meeting will be held on May 23rd.

Extend Meeting Past 10:00 PM

Dr. Calnen moved, seconded by Mrs. LeBlanc that the Enfield Board of Education extends the meeting past 10 PM.

A vote by **show-of-hands – 8-1-0** passed with Mr. Kober in dissent.

14. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mrs. Pickett moved, seconded by Mr. Ryder that the Regular Meeting Minutes of April 23, 2024, be approved as amended. A vote by **show-of-hands 9-0-0** passed unanimously.

15. APPROVAL OF ACCOUNTS AND PAYROLL

Month of April 2024

Mr. Kober moved, seconded by Mrs. Pickett that the Enfield Board of Education accepts the superintendent's certification for:

- The month of April 2024 total expenditures amount to \$6,327,326.38 broken down between payroll totaling \$4,914,196.04 and other accounts totaling \$1,413,130.34 and
- All payments have been made in accordance with the approved budget and are properly accounted for within the books of accounts. Copies of approval for check invoices are properly documented.

A vote by **show of hands 9-0-0** passed unanimously.

Mr. Kober moved, seconded by Dr. Calnen that the Enfield Board of Education accepts the superintendent's certification for:

- The month of April 2024 the total Grant and Head Start expenditures amount to \$354,104.21, broken down between payroll totaling \$306,025.38 and other accounts totaling \$48,078.83 and;
- All payments have been made in accordance with the approved budget and are properly accounted for within the books of accounts. Copies of approval for check invoices are properly documented.

A vote by **show of hands 9-0-0** passed unanimously.

No Line Item Transfers.

16. CORRESPONDENCE & COMMUNICATION

Mr. Ryder reported that Board members have received their invitations to attend the Enfield High School Graduation Ceremony.

Mr. Ryder read a letter from Mr. Drezek thanking the community, parents, students, staff, former elected officials current Town Council members, Mayor Kaupin, Mayor Ludwick, Mayor Cressotti, Mayor Nelson including thanking personally Mr. Ryder, Town Managers past and present Town Manager Mr. Bromson, former Board members including Mrs. Joyce Hall, past Board Chairs Mr. Stokes, Mr. Neville, Mr. Sirard, Mr. Kruzel, ETV Crew and especially Alex Giner, Mr. Kober, Mrs. Pickett, Mrs. Cushman, Dr. Calnen, Mrs. Acree, Mr. Jonaitis, Madam Chair LeBlanc, Chairwoman Riley, Mr. Longey and Mrs. Zalucki. Thank you all and goodnight.

17. EXECUTIVE SESSION - None

18. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Ryder moved, seconded by Mr. Kober to adjourn the Regular Meeting of May 14, 2024.

All ayes, motion passed unanimously. Meeting stood adjourned at 10:12 PM.

Scott Ryder
Secretary
Board of Education

Respectfully Submitted,

Kathy Zalucki, Recording Secretary